

Meeting Minutes
Marshall Service District Planning Committee
Tri-County Feeds, Etc., 7408 John Marshall Highway, Marshall
January 12, 2010
7:00 p.m.

Susan Eddy, Fauquier County Chief of Planning, opened the meeting. She reviewed the highlights of the December community meeting. There was a consensus that regional stormwater management was worth further study, but no consensus was reached on the residential veneer along Route 55.

Transit-Oriented Development Area

The first topic for the night was the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) area identified in the Draft Marshall Plan. (The 2003 Marshall Service District Plan discussed public transportation, but assumed a bus or rail station along I-66.)

The TOD area in the draft plan is located around the intersection of Route 55 and the rail line. Mrs. Eddy noted that the area includes eleven parcels. The land is currently zoned C-2 (commercial highway) and C-3 (commercial-shopping center), two zoning categories that some see as incompatible with the vision of the Marshall Plan.

It is anticipated that the TOD area would be the site for a future passenger rail station, with Virginia Railway Express (VRE) the most likely service provider. VRE has plans to locate passenger stations in Haymarket and Gainesville along the same rail line. A Metro station is unlikely due to high costs and the Dulles corridor being the priority for Metro in the region. A transit stop would draw in traffic from a wide area; therefore, adequate surface or structured parking would have to be built. The transit stop would likely be a magnet for commuters, similar to other stations in the region. Mrs. Eddy presented a map showing a ten and fifteen mile radius from the proposed TOD area, as a rough estimate of the catchment area.

The land uses proposed in the TOD area include a mix of ground floor retail uses with residential apartments/condominiums above at a residential density of up to thirteen units per acre. Buildings could be up to three stories in height with four stories at prominent corners. Office use could also be a component.

Mrs. Eddy then opened the meeting for comments. Citizen comments included:

- The transit stop would induce sprawl.
- The Haymarket train stop would be less than ten miles from Marshall.
- What other public transportation option are there, such as bus?
- It is unlikely that a second track could be added and passenger rail reach Marshall within fifty years.
- A second track is unnecessary given the rail sidings.
- What are the implications for a passenger rail station in Marshall, good and bad?
- It is impractical to plan for passenger rail and the associated land uses without a guarantee that it will happen.

- Increasing the residential density in the TOD area is not a good idea.
- The residential density of thirteen per acre is too high.
- Some residential such as apartments could be a good idea.
- It is possible to imagine passenger rail in Marshall and the TOD is a good idea.
- It is more important to focus on the underlying zoning and what could happen today.

Mrs. Eddy noted that retail in the TOD area would need to be limited, so as not to shift the retail dynamic in Marshall from Main Street Central to the TOD area. However, the current zoning of C-2 or C-3 could cause a much bigger shift in retail patterns. The area could develop now and re-develop later when passenger rail arrived. More comments followed:

- Big box stores are not consistent with the “Main Street” concept. Planning in the Washington region currently encourages TOD. Growth pressures in Gainesville and Haymarket exist and could run to Marshall. This TOD idea is positive, especially if it is pedestrian-orientation. The idea makes sense.
- What is our ability to make this concept and the passenger rail station happen?
- What do we do now with the zoning on the ground to make it appealing?
- The big question is what do we want to see now as opposed to the current zoning?
- Could a highway corridor overlay district help protect and maintain the view sheds and provide guidance to assure appealing design?
- Is the TOD concept for the subject area an “up-zoning” or “up-planning”? It seems that way because of the additional residential proposed.
- How can we plan now for the passenger rail to happen? Could we begin with a bus stop to establish the area as a public transportation area? Assuming that another passenger rail stop does not locate west of Marshall, then people will commute to the stop from further west of Marshall.
- A greater concern for one member was Winchester Road (Route 17) at the Southern Gateway.

Mrs. Eddy stated that the topic of Winchester Road and the gateways to Marshall were discussed at community meetings in 2008, but that they can be slated for a future topic of discussion. More comments on the TOD proposed area followed:

- C-3 zoning in the TOD proposed area is a reality. A compromise to getting a better product would be to allow additional residential in exchange for less-intense commercial.
- The zoning would create a built-environment that is aesthetically unappealing, and distract from Marshall’s Main Street businesses. A practical approach to design in the area is needed.
- “TOD” might be a misnomer; perhaps “high density” is better. If you want Main Street to thrive, you need more residential in Marshall.
- People living in new apartments in the TOD area might not support Main Street businesses. The Bloom is closer.

- If you allow more residential, then more retail is attracted to Marshall, which can in turn affect business from Main Street, depending on its location.
- Do we want to maintain what is here? If so, increase the residential. This will in turn increase retail and increase our fiscal solvency.
- Downtown activity begets investors, which beget higher rents.
- The dilemma is the current zoning. Do we want a strategy to allow something different to occur there, or do we want to do nothing and then have that commercial area potentially take away patrons from Main Street?
- Appearances matter.
- The Plan needs to be aimed at five to ten years from now, rather than fifty years.
- Additional retail is inevitable in Marshall. It could even be chain stores that could take business away from Main Street. We cannot stop this from happening. What we can do is decide where the retail should go and what it should look like.
- Marshall is still a service center for everyday needs and we want it to remain as such.

The TOD discussion closed just after 8 p.m.

Build-Out Discussion

Mrs. Eddy presented the draft land use plan for Marshall. She compared an estimate of residential units for each discrete area given the by-right zoning versus the ramifications in the draft plan. She clarified that the 15-20% bonus as an incentive for good design was in the R-2 and R-4 zoned areas. The figures presented are detailed in the table below.

Area	Additional By-right Residential Units	Extra Residential Units based on the Draft Plan
Residential North	494	82
Residential South	465	44
Residential East	174	106
Main Street Central	0	196
Main Street East	0	83
Main Street West	0	92
Salem Avenue	60	124
TOD	0	139
Industrial	9	(4)
Gateway East	10	51
Gateway North	38	3
Gateway South	128	25
Gateway West	122	22
Total	1,500	963

This table is a more detailed breakdown of Table 1 in the draft plan.

Comments on the build-out followed:

- 7,000 people in fifty years equates to a 3.5% annual growth rate. If the committee decides to make the planning document a fifteen year plan as opposed to a fifty year plan, then the document should reflect a population less than 7,000.
- The committee needs to talk about state law and Urban Development Areas (UDA). Should Marshall be a UDA for northern Fauquier County? If so, this has population growth implications that the committee should discuss.
- What happened to the Form Based Code? Could we use this instead of density bonuses?

Mrs. Eddy explained that development of a form based code could still be a strategy called for in the Comp Plan. It would primarily be used in the Main Street and Salem Avenue areas, but could be used in the gateways as well.

Supervisor Peter Schwartz explained some of the finer points of form based code and its applicability in Virginia.

Mrs. Eddy asked the group to comment on the suggestion that the vision for Marshall should be 10-15 years, not 50 years. She asked the group to comment on where that growth should take place first. Should it begin in the core and radiate outward? Related comments were as follows:

- Commenting on the Veneer land use designation on Route 55: Do not string out the residential on Route 55. Residential should be concentrated. The Veneer would create the opposite effect.
- The Veneer is important. We should work from the outside in, as opposed to the inside, out.
- We do not want more than 7,000 people in Marshall, ever.
- There is no viable plan currently to attract people to Main Street to support the businesses. We need to focus on strategies and implement things to help Main Street thrive. A tourism strategy and a hotel to attract visitors is a good start.
- How can we discuss growth rates when there is zoning on the ground?

Mrs. Eddy noted that the service district boundary could be altered. In other service districts, utilities are limited to certain designated areas. Both of these options could be studied for the Marshall Service District. She also remarked that given enough funding, water could be found in Marshall. Sewer taps however, were limited at this point in time.

- Sewer taps are limited. We need to determine where the remaining sewer taps go in Marshall. Shouldn't some of the taps remain for the industrially-zoned parcels for industrial uses?
- The New Baltimore Service District has designated areas for sewer and no sewer. Perhaps Marshall needs to be planned this way as well.
- We need to be strategic about sewer tap allocation and reserve some for industrial uses.
- Shrinking the service district *is not* a realistic option and does not have political support

- Shrinking the service district *is* a realistic option and three service districts (Catlett, Calverton, and Midland) might be adjusted by the Board of Supervisors because of a limitation on utilities

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on January 26th. The topics will be Historic Building Preservation and Highway Corridor Overlay Districts.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.